Demand for Trade and Industry Status to Agriculture

2483. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will tHe PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Agriculture experts in the country have demanded that the sector be treated on par with trade and industry;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government on such demand;

(c) whether any hurdle exists in according trade and industry status to agriculture; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and steps Government propose to take to remove such hurdles?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (d) A suggestion to treat agriculture on par with industry has been made on different occasions. The National Policy on Agriculture, currently in the final stage of drafting, envisages a positive trade and investment climate for agriculture at par with industry. The intention is to bestow on the agricultural sector, in as many respects as possible, benefits similar to those obtaining the industry such as easy availability of credit and other inputs, free movement of agricultural products and infrastructural facilities for development of agri-business, etc.

Training for Efficient use of water for Agriculture

2484. SHRI SATISCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop a methodology for training panchayats in efficient use of water for agriculture;

(b) if so, te details tereof; and

(c) if not, te reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) There is no formal programme for training panchayats in efficient use of water for agriculture, However, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Command Area Development, assistance is provided to the States by the Ministry of Water Resources for adaptive trials, demonstration and training which disseminate the technical know-how of different facts of efficient water management. The training is imparted to local farmers and functionaries in the Command Areas.

Refinance Facility to North-East Farmers

2485. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) steps taken up by Government to continue the refinance facility to the poor farmers of the North-East States for their crop production;

(b) whether Government are contemplating a new loaning plicy for the North-East farmers; and

(c) if so, when will it be extended, if not, why?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) With a view to continue the refinance facility to the poor farmers of the North-East States for their crop prodction and to ensure timely and adequate flow of credit to the agriculture sector, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) have taken various steps which inter-alia include the following:—

(i) Minimum recovery norms for sanction of credit limits to banks to facilitate flow of credit have been relaxed.

(ii) Norms in the discipline of Minimum Involvement of Internal lendable resources of the banks have been relaxed.

(iii) Banks in North-Eastern Region (NER) are charged interest at minimum rate i.e. 4% irrespective of their level of dependence on short term (SAO) refinance from NABARD.

(iv) In view of weak structure of the cooperatives and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), the Commercial banks in the region were encouraged to avail refinance from NABARD for financing of all eligible Agriculture and Rural Development activities.

(v) Refinance from NABAR has been made available at an increased rate of 90% to all banks for all schemes both under Farm and Non-Farm sector w.e.f. 1.4.1993. National Bank provides refinance to State Land Development Banks at 95% of bank loan for lending to Minor irrigation purpose in the North-East region (NER).

(vi) In respect of banks/brances in NER the branches with annual recovery rate of 50% and above will have unrestricted eligibility and those with annual recovery rate below 50% will have restricted eligibility as against cut-off recovery rate of 60% in the case of states, in other regions.

(b) and (c) In view of steps taken above, Government do not propose to have any separate loaning policy for the farmers in NER.

Import of Copra and Coconut Oil

2486. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the import of copra and coconut oil has affected the indigenous coconut farmers due to drop in the price of their produce; and

(b) if so, whether Government are considering their demand to stop all such imports which affect the indigenous farmers adversely?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) As per Exim Policy 1997-2002, the import of edible oils are permitted under OGL, however, the import of coconut oil, seed copra, expeller coconut continues to be canalised through State Trading Corporation of India. In the wake of rising trend in the prices of edible oils and to maintain the price of edible oilsat a reasonable level, while the import duty on edible oils was reduced to 15%, the duty applicalbe on import of coconut oil remained unchanged at 45%. Only in the Union Budget 1999-2000, it has been sligtly reduced to 40%.

As per available information, there was negligible import of coconut oil during 1997, 1998 and 1999. However, 731 tonnes and 76 tonnes of seed copra were imported in 1997 and 1998 respectively. Considering the total Indian crop of coconut and total import of around 20 lakh tonnes of edible oils during 1997-98 (Oil Year) the quantity of import of seed copra is negligible.

There is no proposal to ban imports.

बाढ़ के कारण हानि

2487. **प्रो॰ राम बख्श सिंह वर्मा:**
श्रीमती मालती शर्मा:

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) वर्ष 1997-98 के दौरान देश में बाढ़ से जान-माल की कुल कितनी हानि हुई;

(ख) क्या सरकार बाढ़ से प्रभावित राज्यों को आर्थिक तथा अन्य प्रकार की सहायता उपलब्ध कराती है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो उक्त अवधि के दौरान राज्यों को उपलब्ध कराई गई धनराशि का ब्यौरा क्या है?

कृषि मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सोम पाल): (क) राज्य सरकारों से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार, वर्षा/बाढ़, चक्रवात तथा भू-स्खलनों से 0.02 लाख व्यक्तियों और 0.25 लाख मवेशियों की मृत्यु के अलावा 41.52 लाख हैक्टे॰ फसल क्षेत्र तथा 7.69 लाख घरों, को नुकसान पहुंचने की सूचना मिली है।

(ख) और (ग) बाढ़ सहित प्राकृतिक आपदाओं के घटित होने की स्थिति में राहत व पुनर्वास उपाय करने के लिये राज्यों को आपदा राहत कोष से वार्षिक तौर पर आबंटन किया जाता है। 1997-98 के दौरान सभी राज्य सरकारों को आपदा राहत कोष का 947.78 करोड़ रुपये का केन्द्रीय अंश निर्मुक्त किया गया था। बाढ़/भू-स्खलन के घटित होने की स्थिति में 1997-98 के दौरान राष्ट्रीय आपदा राहत कोष से राज्यों को दी गई सहायता का ब्यौरा नीचे दिया गया है:

		(करोड़ रुपये में)
1. बिहार	बाढ़	10.00
2. गुजरात	बाढ़	86.90
3. हिमाचल प्रदेश	बाढ़	24.80
4. केरल	बाढ़/भू-स्खलन	12.91
5. मध्य प्रदेश	बाढ़	22.50